During the years from 1870-75 Miller Willis, known as the fire-baptised lay evangelist, established a Sunday School and conducted weekly prayer meetings in a little Presbyterian chapel on the 1700 block of St. Luke Street in the part of Augusta known as West End.

This Sunday School and prayer meeting grew in interest until 1875 when Rev. Caleb W. Key formally organized them into a church and was appointed its first pastor. He moved the congregation into a little wooden chapel on the corner of Crawford Ave. and St. Luke Street where the church is today. Twelve years later the total membership was 476. The name St. Luke, is derived from the location of the church on St. Luke Street, Augusta, Richmond County, Georgia.

On August 16, 1885, the Women's Missionary Society was organized with 33 members. During the pastorate of W. O. McMullen the Women's Society was organized into the (5) circles that we have today. Our present enrollment is 88. The following have served as office of president of the W.S.C.S.:

Mrs. E. M. Osbon, Mrs. J. H. Wilhelm, Mrs. R. E. Elliot, Mrs. W. T. Burton,(2) Mrs. Mildred Jackson, Mrs. Gladys Sedberry, Mrs. B. F. Moss (2).

From the years 1875-1883 Rev. Caleb W. Key, Rev. M. J. Cofer, Rev. J. V. Morris and Rev. Miles H. Dillard Served as pastors of St. Luke. During the eight years the membership increased and in 1883 it became necessary to replace the wooden chapel with an up-to-date modern brick structure. In 1891 the Sunday School had an enrollment of 531 with an average attendance of 228. The total collection for the month of December, 1895 was $40.95. Our present Sunday School enrollment is 474 with an average attendance of 280. Mr. Frank Lever is our present chairman of the Board with 33 Board members. Our total collection for the month of December, 1961 was $3,362.88. In 1896 Henry Mills was chairman of the Board with eleven members.

In 1907, under the pastorate of Rev. Dixon, the Sunday School annex, containing assembly rooms, pastor's study, kitchen, and twelve class rooms was built. In 1926 under the pastorate of Rev. W. O. McLulle the old Sunday School building gave way to a more up-to-date structure.

From the years 1926-1934 Rev. G. W. Barrett, Rev. A. A. Sullivan and Rev. J. J. Mize and Rev. B. F. Mize served as pastors. In 1934 under the pastorate of Rev. Mize, St. Luke sponsored the Martha Lester Church with W. H. Key as pastor. During the pastorate of Bro. Mize the church's membership was 1,182. Mr. J. H. Wilhelm was Sunday School Superintendent and Mr. W. F. Burton was chairman of the Board of Stewards. Also at that time the Junior, Intermediate, and Senior leagues were organized with Mrs. W. F. Burton and Mrs. May as leaders. During that year Mr. R. C. Williams was treasurer, and Mr. E. L. Jackson was secretary. Mrs. B. F. Moss was president of the Women's Society of Christian Service.

During the years 1945-1949, St. Luke was under the ministry of Rev. Gordon Rainey. During this time new pews were purchased and the auditorium was remodeled, also the parsonage was remodeled and new furniture purchased for that. In 1946 the old coal furnace was converted to an oil furnace at the cost of $5,100. During Bro. Rainey's pastorate many outstanding evangelists held revivals at St. Luke. Among them were Rev. Henry Screws, Rev. John Church, Dr. E. R. Overly and Dr. B. C. Gamble.

Rev. W. L. Brackman served as pastor from 1949-1954. During that period about 20 young men answered the call of the ministry. Stained glass windows were installed in the auditorium and beautiful green carpeting was laid. Eight large classrooms and a modern kitchen valued at about $30,000 were constructed.
From the years 1954-60 Rev. J. B. Godfrey was pastor at St. Luke. During that time a recreation room, large Sunday School room and garage were added, at a value of $12,000. A new parsonage was purchased on the corner of Glenwood Ave. and Dan St. in Augusta valued at $23,000. Many outstanding revivals were conducted with Rev. F. S. Andrews and Rev. Phil Andrews leading.

Rev. L. S. Baugh was pastor from 1960-61. During that year the Church purchased land adjoining the church property valued at about $7,250. A parking lot was excavated.

Rev. R. W. Mabry was pastor from 1961-64. During Rev. Mabry's pastorate many changes were taking place in the Methodist Church and many of the members bitterly opposed these changes. The World Council of Churches, the efforts being made toward integration, the combining of some of the jurisdictions and the conferences were some of the changes that were resented most. St. Luke lost a number of whole families as well as many individual members who had been active and loyal and especially the attendance at Sunday School began to show a steady decrease. It was necessary to disband several classes at this time and the financial picture was very discouraging. A cash gift from the Graniteville Company helped to provide one of the improvements so badly needed at this time and the outside of the church was painted during the last year of Rev. Mabry's Ministry.

Rev. Harvey Smith, who was reared in Georgia, came back to the North Georgia Conference and followed Rev. Mabry as pastor of St. Luke. Mr. Smith brought much ability and talent to this pastorate as did his co-partner Anne, for he had been in an executive position with Boy Scouts of America before entering the Ministry and had been active in many phases of Community life so he was able to help heal some of the grievances of the parish. His work with Home and Family Life had attracted people and he was in constant demand as speaker before local groups and during the Fall of 1966 he had taught a course at the National Convention on Family Life in Chicago. The members of St. Luke made it possible for Anne to accompany him on this trip. Parents without Partners was organized locally during this time and Mr. Smith
and the pastor of Central Christian worked out a plan for fellowship together and began worshipping together every fifth Sunday night, alternating the place of the meeting and the Minister to deliver the sermon. Many evidences of brotherhood and warmth were beginning to be felt and Rev. Smith was able to get Bishop Owen Smith to be Home Coming Sunday’s guest minister.

In preparation for Home Coming and in honor of the distinguished guest at St. Luke the W.S.C.S. bought carpet for the sanctuary and the church had the walls painted. When Home Coming Day arrived St. Luke was reverently proud of its soft gold colored carpet which reflected the gold in the stained glass windows while the pale blue walls complimented the darker blue shades of the windows. The New Methodist Hymnals had been published and through individuals, classes and the W.S.C.S. gifts the worn hymnals were replaced by deep purple bound Hymnals that seemed to pick up the purple shades of the windows so St. Luke’s newly decorated sanctuary was a great source of joy and pride.

During his second year at St. Luke Rev. Harvey Smith had completed work on his Master’s Degree in Theology and he decided he wanted to go back to the New England Conference. Two unfortunate incidents had occurred that had caused Mr. Smith to want to terminate his ministry. It had been reported that he left his ministry and marched with the Selma march and that he did not believe in the Virgin Birth. He used a pastoral letter to refute these statements but he returned to Massachusetts to be pastor of First Community United Methodist Church in Medford.

Rev. Virgil Nation had been associate pastor at Trinity-on-the-Hill and knowing of the vacancy at St. Luke when Rev. Smith transferred Rev. Nation asked to be assigned to St. Luke. Just as he was beginning his work at St. Luke one of the most needed programs of the church was started and through Urban and Inner City work and later Town and Country Commission. St. Luke’s Home Mission Project was born. Mrs. Clara Harbison, an Augustan already known and loved throughout the city and Augusta District was assigned to St. Luke. Together Rev. Nation and Mrs. Harbison, set up an office, worked out schedules, opened an emergency clothes closet and pantry with summer day camp, Vacation Church School, Mothers Day Out, additional
week day sessions of church school and as these new activities were beginning there was a change in the church that could be felt. The change was slow but those who attended were aware of warmth and friendliness.

Paraments for the church had been given by the Junior High department in memory of Mrs. W. F. Burton who worked so faithfully with this group. The lovely seasonal colors of the church were used in each morning service and the beauty and dignity of the Methodist ritual was made even more impressive. With the Home Mission Program bringing in children from greater distances the need for a church school bus and a recreation center were two of the pressing needs of this period. St. John's United Methodist Church shared their Recreation Center at Clarks Hill with St. Luke which helped with this urgent need.

During this pastorate St. Luke received a request from the Richmond County Board of Education to furnish nine class rooms for them during the final months of building construction on the new John Milledge Grammar School. In return the School Board promised to pay for any damage to the building or grounds, pay for the use of utilities at the church and that at the conclusion of their temporary use of the rooms the Board would paint the walls and each room used during the time they were quartered there. This project moved along without trouble and it actually seemed to create good will for St. Luke in the community.

A precedent started with Rev. Nation was a day set aside as a planning session when all church officials and teachers came together to plan and outline the whole coming year's work. A Calendar of events would be made so that the meetings were staggered over the month instead of over lapping and this calendar was kept for convenient reference to avoid having too many meetings in a week.

Handsome doors for the front of the church were given by Mrs. Albert Huntington as a memorial to her husband, Mr. Albert Huntington, and while it took time to find doors to fit the type architecture of St. Luke the church has taken great pride in them since the installation.
Rev. Nation continued the custom of fifth Sunday worship with Central Christian, was very much in demand as a speaker and teacher throughout the city and there was a decided increase in the attendance of young people.

Many happy experiences took place during Rev. Nation’s Ministry, revivals, covered dish suppers, a larger number of young people in attendance and the class of young married couples which Rev. Nation taught is a tribute in itself to his ministry because so many of them are becoming active in the program of the church. One sad memory of this ministry was the loss through death of so many of the older St. Luke members. There must have been more funerals for Mr. Nation to conduct than any former pastor had been called upon to do.

At the June meeting of the Administrative Board Mr. Nation disclosed his decision to leave the ministry and told of his future plans to work and live in Augusta and that his work would be with a local firm of architects. It was a great blow to St. Luke for Rev. Nation had the very qualities the church needed so badly in the difficult days of change.

It is impossible to evaluate the Ministry of this able young minister, only eternity can tell what was accomplished but two things will always be remembered when Rev. Nation’s pastorate is discussed. First he wanted to serve as St. Luke’s pastor and second he was considered one of the most promising young ministers in the North Georgia Conference and could have had any charge he had asked for. St. Luke had been led to believe that it was on a blacklist and that ministers in the conference did not want to come to serve St. Luke. Along with the blessings and accomplishments his pastorate brought Rev. Nation helped to restore the pride of this church and it’s people.

Value of Church $225,000
Value of Parsonage $30,000(Furniture included)

A trust clause is recorded at Richmond County Court House.

Source of information:
1870 - 75  First located on south of St. Luke St. in the 1700 block - met in a little Presby- 
terian Chapel in that part of Augusta known as West End
1875 - moved into a wooden structure on the corner of Crawford Ave. and St. Luke St. where the cruch now stands.
1883 - "up-to-date modern brick structure" was built
1894 - Parsonage purchased

Deed - January 24, 1874 purchased from the Augusta Land Co. by trustees:
Cost $200.00. Dimensions: front 53' 9" depth 160' back 53' 9"
These dimensions do not include later additions.

"In 1907, under the pastorate of Rev. R. H. Dixon, the Sunday School Annex, containing assembly rooms, pastor's study, kitchen, and twelve class rooms was built.
In 1926 under the pastor of Rev. W. O. McHullem the old Sunday School building gave way to a more up-to-date structure.
1945-1949, nave and parsonage remodeled.
1949 - 1954, Eight large classrooms and a modern kitchen valued at about $30,000 were constructed, also stained glass windows were installed in the nave, and beautiful green carpeting was laid.
1954-1960, a recreation room, large Sunday School room and garage were added, at a value of $12,000. A new parsonage was purchased on the corner of Glenwood Dr. and Lan St. valued at $23,000.
1960-61, Church purchased land adjoining the Church property valued at about $7,250
When the Annual Conference met in June 1969, St. Luke was assigned a new minister in the Rev. Terry L. Phillips. Terry, as he was called by most, was a young single man and St. Luke was his second full-time church. As has been stated previously, St. Luke had one appointment who served two years and transferred and the next one served two years and quit the ministry which caused the leaders some concern as why this should happen. But Terry picked up where the others had left off and for the next four years St. Luke had four of the best years in its history under Terry's leadership. He, as said earlier, was a single man and lived in the Parsonage alone. The older ladies of the church felt sorry for him and almost adopted him. He, in turn, soon learned where to find help when he needed it.

Rev. Phillips even though a young man, was one of the most devout and dedicated Christian men to be found anywhere. He loved the Lord and he loved people. This combination was what St. Luke needed and great things happened under Terry's leadership.

Terry started soon after his arrival visiting shut-ins and the membership. Soon everyone loved him. He also worked very close with the officials in the Church and everyone was glad to have him as their leader.

As stated earlier, the home mission project was born and under Terry's guidance and help much was accomplished. Mrs. Clara Harbinson is doing a job any church, especially St. Luke, is proud of. Mrs. Harbinson has worked with and helped over 265 families in the area and still helping in every way and is a great asset to St. Luke.

As was mentioned previously, the need of church bus was stressed and today St. Luke has two buses operating each Sunday to bring children and elderly to church who would otherwise not be able to come at all.

Under the leadership of Rev. Phillips the budget was raised every year. Maybe not as much as some would like, but it is now felt we pay our Pastor a fair salary, especially when we have so few who are able to pay at all.

Following are some of the things that was accomplished at St. Luke during Rev. Phillips pastorate. The Church had long found the need to air condition the sanctuary but in the meeting when the decision was made to start the project, there was no money in the budget for the project. The officials started on faith and the job was completed and paid for in full and never was in the budget of the Church.
After completion of the air conditioning it was brought to the attention of the Church that the entire Sunday School Plant had unsafe heating system. Again after the co-operation for the air-conditioner, the Church stepped out on faith for over $5,000. In the end the heating system was complete and all indebtedness was paid in full during Terry's pastorate at St. Luke.

On December 30, 1971, St. Luke had a great loss in the death of Mrs. Gladys Sedberry. She was the Church Treasurer for many years and a most devout Christian; one who never learned what the word NO meant. Gladys was very active in all phases of church work and was loved by all who knew her. A new organ was dedicated in memory of Mrs. Gladys Sedberry replacing the old one. This was paid for by gifts, donations and memorials from loved ones and friends during the pastorate of Rev. Terry Phillips.

Another great event happened at St. Luke, one that seldom happens in the life of a Church, was the wedding of

Miss Mary Singleton
and
Rev. Terry L. Phillips

on July 15, 1971. The ceremony was performed in the Church by Dr. Delma Hagood, District Superintendent of the Augusta District. It was a very happy occasion in the life of the Church.

During the four years of Rev. Phillips' pastorate at St. Luke he was always near when he was needed. He would always listen to problems. He regularly visited the sick and shut-ins and he counted it a privilege to serve St. Luke. Many members was added to the Church membership and this writer did not hear anyone criticize him during his stay. After four years he felt he was needed elsewhere and a new pastor was assigned to St. Luke.